

Ideas List
developed by
Corrections Advisory Council Subcommittee

Legislation

- Consider implementation of a Proposition 36-type of law in Montana, which would deal with first-time drug possession offenses with treatment instead of incarceration
- Provide three months of unemployment to help offenders leaving prison restart their lives (money to be administered by parole officers)
- Modify existing drug and mental health courts into dual-purpose “treatment courts” and increase their number \$\$\$
- Provide diversion payments to counties to reward those that develop programs and services capable of diverting offenders from prison (payment amounts would be based on the size reduction in the number of offenders sent to prison from a county) \$\$\$
- Develop a strategy on how to deal with sex offenders (community placement, electronic monitoring, mandatory community treatment, longer prison sentences, lifetime registration, etc) \$\$\$
- Restore the practice of awarding inmates “good time,” the process by which sentences are shortened for those who behave well while in prison
- Develop a children’s psychiatric hospital to end the practice of sending Montana youth out of state for treatment \$\$\$

Policy

- Seek more grants to provide re-entry programs and services for adult offenders
- Seek general fund to maintain juvenile re-entry programs previously funded with a federal grant
- Increase the number of case managers able to help offenders find community services \$\$\$
- Develop a system for determining the number of special-needs inmates

- Provide more chemical-dependency and mental-health counselors in probation and parole offices \$\$\$
- Develop a better assessment tool for detecting mental health and other problems among offenders
- Create an inventory of mental health services available in communities
- Increase female offenders' access to vocational training and to counseling that focuses on improving their self-esteem \$\$\$
- Increase the number of probation and parole officers (this is part of the department's budget request) \$\$\$
- More institutional parole officers to help inmates develop plans for their release (this is part of the department's budget request) \$\$\$
- Offer training courses for female offenders in fields where demand is high, such as nursing assistants and highway construction site flaggers \$\$\$

Rules

- Implement use of "guide homes" for adult offenders (these are private homes offering temporary housing for offenders and providing positive role models and mentoring) \$\$\$
- Develop memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with American Indian tribes that will give the state ability to supervise offenders on reservations